

City of Beacon
Commission on Human Relations

Summary Annual Report 2010 – 2015

“Where do all universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home- so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any map of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual person: the neighborhood he lives in; the school or college he attends; the factory, farm or office where he works. Such are the places where every man, woman, and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerted citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world.”

Eleanor Roosevelt, the United Nations, March 27, 1958

“We should all know that diversity makes for a rich tapestry and we must understand that all the threads of the tapestry are equal in value no matter what their color.”

Maya Angelou, Author, Presidential Medal of Freedom

“I speak not for myself but for those without voice...those who have fought for their rights...their right to live in peace, their right to be treated with dignity, their right to equality of opportunity, their right to be educated.”

Malala Yousafzai, Author, Nobel Peace Prize

“The heart of the question is whether all Americans are to be afforded equal rights and equal opportunities; whether we are going to treat our fellow Americans as we want to be treated.”

President John F. Kennedy, Civil Rights Address, June 1963

Brief Overview of the History:

The City of Beacon created the Commission on Human Relations by incorporating it into its Charter and adopting governing By-Laws. The Commission is comprised of up to 15 volunteers who are approved and appointed by the Mayor and City Council. The Beacon Human Relations Commission (HRC) was established in the wake of historic local race riots in order to foster a climate of understanding and cooperation in all areas of life among all groups and individuals within the city's jurisdiction. It continues as the last functioning **city** human rights organization within Dutchess County, which, not incidentally, is the birthplace of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Additionally, New York is the first state to establish a **state** human rights agency.

Brief Overview of the Mission:

The purpose of the Commission, as set out in its By-Laws, and in accordance with the General Municipal Consolidated Law Code of New York State, is:

- To foster mutual respect and a climate of understanding among all racial, ethnic and religious groups;
- To inquire into incidents of conflict within the community;
- To inquire into allegations of discrimination in work, housing, public accommodations, institutions, and services;
- To enlist community cooperation to foster mutual esteem, equity and justice in all areas of community life;
- To coordinate with city, county, state and federal human rights agencies and make referrals as appropriate.

**Authorities for the
City of Beacon
Human Relations
Commission**

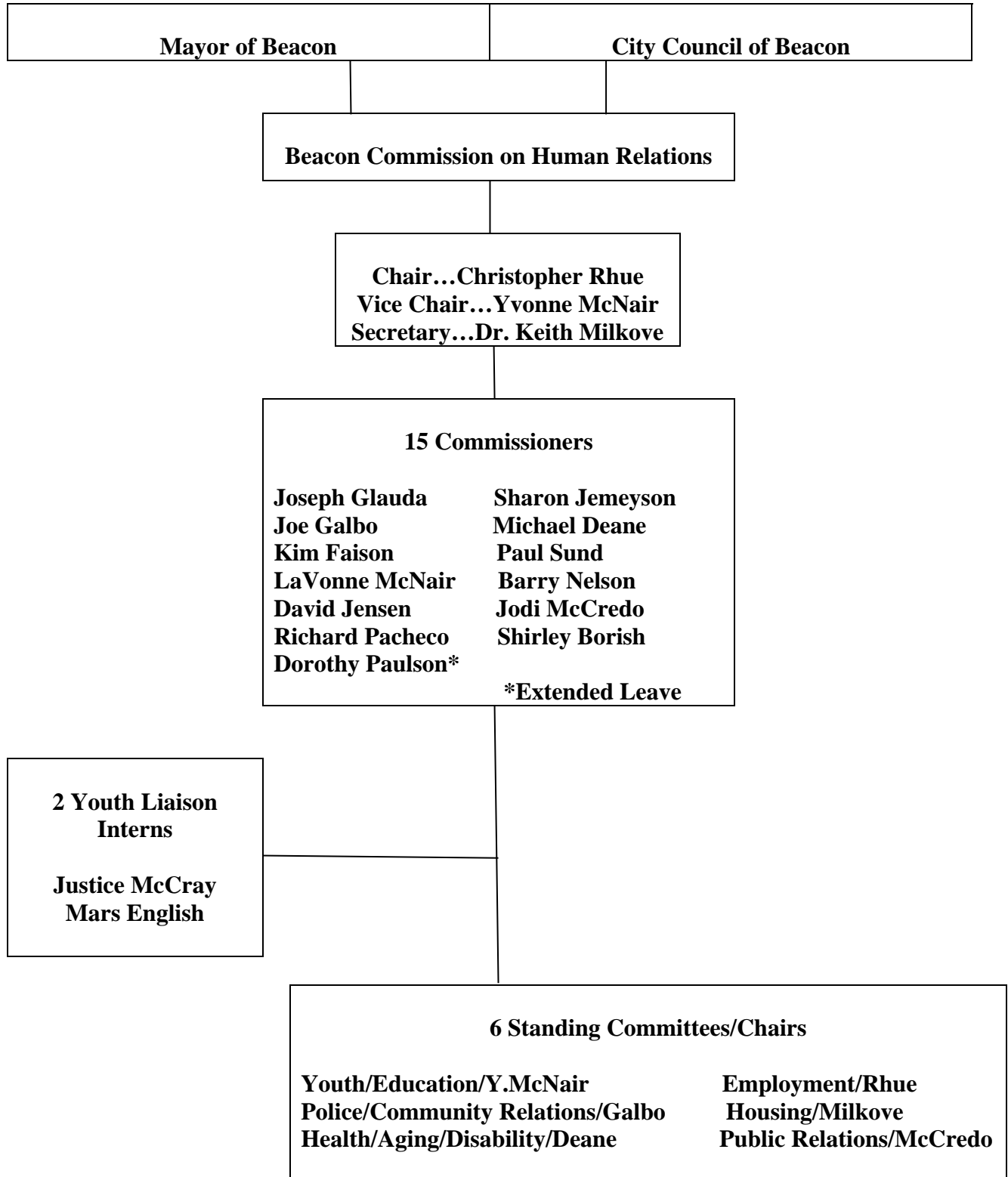
Mayor of Beacon

**City Council of
Beacon**

**Section 5-8 City of Beacon
Code & Article 12-D New
York State Law Code**

**City of Beacon Commission
on Human Relations**

Organizational Chart for the Human Relations Commission



HRC HIGHLIGHTS: 5 Year Platform Retrospective

(From 2010 through 2014 HRC accomplished, sponsored, or participated in the following.)

- Conducted an informational public forum “The Human Relations Commission at Work” at the Howland Cultural Center. Invited Mayor Gold and other featured speakers to make presentations. Facilitated public discussion of experiences of discrimination within the Beacon community.
- Conducted an informational public forum “Symposium for Seniors” at the Howland Cultural Center with an HRC presentation on Age Discrimination. Coordinated with external resources for presentations of special interest to seniors, including Adult Protective Services, Scams Targeting the Elderly, Successful Aging, and Senior Housing Programs.
- Sponsored a city-wide student art and writing contest “I Appreciate My City” in conjunction with the Beacon Centennial Celebration. Coordinated with the Beacon High School and Rombout Middle School in collecting, judging and awarding prizes to the top student entrants. Coordinated with the Mayor and I Am Beacon to facilitate presentations by student contest winners at the Centennial dinner.
- An HRC representative served as liaison to the Centennial Planning Committee.
- Ongoing coordination with the Beacon Housing Authority to resolve numerous complaints filed by residents and/or citizens of Beacon in the following areas of concerns: establishment of appropriate housing complaint procedures free of retaliation; removal of predatory parking and towing procedures; improvement in parking signage practices; compliance with city regulations regarding licenses and leases for resident dogs; improvements to processing system for resident work orders; maintenance of habitable standards for occupancy of public housing facilities; smoking regulations; safety and health concerns for the elderly; and the facility’s obligation to provide reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities. Additional issues in dispute included the need for site security, fighting on the premises, BHA’s applicant waiting list, restrictive visitor policies, and failure to deliver promised site upgrades. HRC representatives conducted an onsite visit to address and resolve parking and signage issues and participated in meetings with BHA representatives to resolve resident concerns.

- Ongoing coordination with the Mayor and the Chief of Police in resolving individual citizen complaints against police officers. HRC representatives participated in redrafting and finalizing the new police complaint form.
- An HRC representative served as liaison on the recruitment and selection committee for the new Chief of Police.
- HRC invited the new Chief of Police to make a presentation to Commission members about his goals for the Police Department and to establish joint efforts to address systemic barriers to communication between the Department and citizens of Beacon. The Chief presented “Police Policies and Procedures Manual.”
- Other community leaders and organizations invited to make presentations or provide training to HRC members included the following: Former Executive Director of DCHRC (Marilyn Vetrano) presented two separate training sessions, “New Member Training for Human Relations Commission” and “Arrest and Conviction Records”; the Director of Community Voices Heard (Blair Goodman) made a presentation on community organizing; and earlier presentation were made by the former Police Chief and HUD representatives. Ongoing coordination with the Mayor, City Council, City Administrator and City Attorney regarding guidance on multiple issues including, fund raising for student contest prizes; the need for printing materials related to publicizing HRC activities; and proposal for designated liaison with the City Council.
- HRC sponsored the public showing of the first installment of the PBS documentary “The Illusion of Race – Part I” at the Howland Cultural Center. Co-facilitated with a community leader the public discussion of issues.
- HRC representatives coordinated with the Police Department to resolve a parking complaint brought by a local church and with representatives of Metro North to address the need for more parking slots designated for people with disabilities.
- Ongoing liaison activities and support for community organizations sponsoring city events, including the Strawberry, Pumpkin, Corn and other festivals and celebrations.
- Ongoing distribution of state agency anti-discrimination brochures as obtained.
- Ongoing investigations and informal attempts to resolve allegations of discrimination. Referrals of unresolved complaints made to the appropriate city, state and federal agencies, as warranted.

HRC OVERVIEW: Platform Activities Underway

(From 2015 - 2016 HRC Accomplishments)

- Youth Police Academy. HRC liaison and coordination role with the Mayor, the Chief of Police, the Beacon School District Superintendent, the Rombout Middle School Principal, and the Recreation Department Chair regarding plans for the establishment of a Youth Police Academy.
- An HRC representative will conduct and HRC volunteer chaperones identified to participate in the repeat summer program of training and field trips for potential student candidates of the Academy.
- Beacon High School. HRC liaison activities with the BHS Drop Out forum committee. Ongoing updating of the Civil Service Bulletin Board in the High School's guidance department. Recruited local Union participation in providing information on internships and apprenticeships.
- Beacon Housing Authority. Review of revised complaint form and practices. Pending - follow-up needed on ensuring notification of investigation results to the original complainant.
- Ongoing HRC participation with community organization meetings, including the Mayor, the Police Department and Community Relations meetings, Speak Out Beacon, and I Am Beacon, etc.
- Establishment of two Youth Liaison Intern positions. The students (Beacon High School and Dutchess County Community College) will participate as volunteers in standing committee activities and provide the Commission with the youth perspective on community issues. Sought guidance from the City Attorney on efforts to utilize the technical computer skills of the interns to the Commission's advantage in developing a computerized complaint logging system.
- Met with the designated EEO/Human Rights Officer for the newly reestablished Dutchess County Commission on Human Rights. Discussed strategies for future coordination and cooperation.

HRC OVERVIEW: 5 Year Plan Goals and Objectives

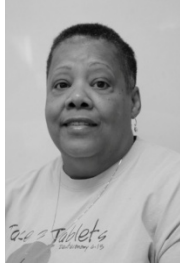
(From 2016 - 2020)

- Completion of a revised independent complaint form for the HRC investigation process.
- Adoption of the proposed numbering system for complaints, contacts and inquiries.
- Development of a computerized complaint logging system to facilitate numeric record keeping of all HRC contacts, complaints, resolutions and referrals to other agencies.
- Updates and revisions of existing HRC flyers, fact sheets and brochures.
- Establishment of a secure HRC recordkeeping facility, equipment or location accessible to all members of the Commission for logging and tracking updates.
- Development of Standard Operating Procedures for the Commission.
- Public showing of Parts II and III of the PBS documentary “The Illusion of Race.”
- Establishment of the practice of timely submissions of future annual HRC reports to the Mayor and members of the City Council. Guidance on wider distribution of the report will be obtained.
- Adoption of long-range and short-term goals and objectives for the future. Consideration of the development of a local diversity plan in coordination with the Mayor and City Council in order to broaden the applicant pool for Beacon institutions and businesses.
- Efforts directed at increasing the awareness of the Commission’s work within the Beacon community.
- Continued efforts directed at projects already in the works, including the Youth Police Academy and the Housing Authority complaint processing system and other long term community concerns.

2016 Human Relations Commission Officers



Chair Chris Rhue



Vice Chair Yvonne McNair



Secretary Keith Milkove

2016 Commissioners



Joseph Glauda



Sharon Jemeyson



Joe Galbo



Michael Deane



Kim Faison



Paul Sund



LaVonne McNair



Barry Nelson



David Jensen



Jodi McCredo



Ricardo Pacheco



Shirley Borish

2016 Youth Liaison Interns



Justice McCray



Mars English

Christopher Rhue: DCCC Teacher, Troubador, *Baha'i*, & world traveler.

Yvonne McNair: Retired DOCS Librarian, IBM employee & Martin Luther King volunteer.

Keith Milkove: Scientist/Engineer & 30-year member of the *Beacon Hebrew Alliance*.

Joseph Glauda: Teacher in the Wappingers School District, Van Wyck Jr. High, 13 years.

Sharon Jemeyson: Writer, former Social Worker & retired 30-year EEOC employee.

Joe Galbo: Retired Police Officer & community volunteer.

Michael Deane: Retired Banker, Auditor, Analyst, Social Worker & Drug Counselor.

Kim Faison: Former Counselor, Detention Supervisor, Teacher's Aide & Nurse Assistant.

Paul Sund: Viet Nam Vet, former PTSD Counselor, Registered Nurse & Truck Driver.

Lavonne McNair: Paralegal at a law firm and member of the non-profit *I Am Beacon*.

Barry Nelson: Retired licensed Psychologist and School Counselor.

David Jensen: Attorney.

Jodi McCredo: Small Business Owner, *Beacon Hebrew Alliance* Treasurer & BSD advocate.

Ricardo Pacheco: Social Studies Teacher, Pastor & Navy Chaplain.

Shirley Borish: No bio information available.

Justice McCray: DCCC student & Computer Guru for the Howland Public Library.

Mars English: BHS senior, high honor roll & member of Track Team, pole vaulting event.



The City of Beacon Commission on Human Relations, otherwise known as the HRC, is shown busy at work in a typical Saturday morning session.

The all-volunteer commission is provided work space by another community organization, the Beacon Community Resource Center in their facility at 23 W. Center.

The public is invited to attend meetings and share their concerns or seek information about discrimination. Meetings are held at 10 am the first Saturday of every month.

Beacon Human Relations Commission

Public Meetings 10:00 am the First Saturday of the Month

**At the Beacon Community Resource Center
23 West Center Street
Beacon, NY 12508**

Call our Public Hotline and Leave a Message for a Return Call

845-838-5094

or

Contact us by Email at cobcohr@gmail.com

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